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Thursday, October 20, 2011

The Honourable NOËL A. KINSELLA  
Speaker

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(Daily index of proceedings appears at back of this issue).

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## THE SENATE

Thursday, October 20, 2011

The Senate met at 1:30 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

### SENATORS' STATEMENTS

#### IRAN

##### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Hon. Linda Frum:** Honourable senators, last month in New York, in the shadow of the sham "human rights conference" known as Durban III, I had the honour to attend a counter-conference organized by the human rights organization UN Watch. At this conference, leading dissidents and human rights activists from Iran, Syria, Cuba, Burma, North Korea and China assembled to shine a light on the extreme human rights violations that the UN's corrupt "Human Rights Committee" would rather ignore.

One of the most touching pieces of testimony at the UN Watch conference was a letter smuggled out of Iran's notorious Evin Prison, read aloud by Iranian human rights activist Banafsheh Zand-Bonazzi. I wish to put this letter into the record of the proceedings of the Senate of Canada as a show of solidarity with the suffering of its author, a brave and principled ayatollah whose only crime was to advocate in favour of the separation of religion and government.

According to Amnesty International, poor prison conditions, torture and ill treatment have left Ayatollah Boroujerdi in a dangerously precarious state of health. I read his letter today to honour his courage and that of his family and supporters and to let them know that we in the Senate of Canada bear witness to their struggle and to the leadership and criminal treatment of this good man.

Here is his message:

A message from Ayatollah Kazemeyni Boroujerdi to the 66th annual UN general assembly.

Honorable U.N. Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, respected and esteemed representatives of the countries around the world, ladies and gentlemen of the free world,

The abominable oppression and subjugation of the people of Iran by the Revolutionary Guards, under the ruling dictatorship is so egregious, and their apparatus for its cover-up so systematic that the world at large never learns of the actual horror stories and the crimes committed by the Islamic regime against the humanity of the people of Iran.

I am hereby informing you, the defenders of human rights, that the innocent people of Iran are deprived of their most basic human and civil rights while their natural

resources and national wealth and assets are being squandered on saturating the world with a universal propaganda campaign devised for an expansionist agenda of these sinister claimants of faith.

The wave of poverty, despair, fear and helplessness has created a desperate atmosphere in my country but the regime relentlessly censors and prevents the information about the condition of the poor citizens of Iran to be disseminated.

I am appealing to all people of faith, and reverence to divine Justice, to come to the aid of a nation that was deceived in the name of God 32 years ago; that exchanged the throne and crown for a politicized Islam. Now Godlessness and Immorality has encroached on all levels of our society and has shattered the peoples confidence and trust in faith and spirituality.

Now that the hope of democracy in the Islamic world is spreading and the foundation of human rights is being established throughout the region, the international community's support for the struggling people of Iran is needed for Iran to reach independence and self determination and also establishment of peace in the Middle East.

This humble preacher who has continually spoken out against the incursion of religion in government and politics, has spent over 2000 days in the nightmarish prisons and torture chambers of the Islamic regime's Dictatorship. Every single day, I have been denied council, and my wife, children, extended family and defenders have been systematically threatened and actively abused.

I thank you for your time and willingness to lend an ear to the Iranian plight and eagerly await your support for the oppressed people of our nation.

Seyyed Hossein Kazemeyni Boroujerdi

#### THE LATE HON. REG ALCOCK, P.C.

**Hon. Rod A. A. Zimmer:** Honourable senators, I rise today to praise a man, a giant of a man with a giant heart, a gentle man with a whispering walk, piercing eyes and, when needed, thunder in his voice. He had the uncanny ability to recognize our strengths and abilities, and forgive our trespasses. As in the theme from Star Trek, he went where no man has gone before.

Honourable senators, he believed in the power in all of us, especially young persons, and helped each one of us realize our hidden talents that we never knew we possessed. He taught us to think big and, in the immortal words of one of his colleagues in cabinet, Belinda Stronach, "Think as big as you can and then double it."



His contribution to his riding, community, province, country and the world was immeasurable. As President of the Treasury Board, he championed, revolutionized, pioneered and reformed open government and access to information. A landmark that will always stand proudly, as he initially secured the federal government funding, is the Canadian Museum of Human Rights in Winnipeg. I am meeting with the Mayor of Winnipeg next week, and I will recommend that they revise the name to the "Reg Alcock Canadian Museum of Human Rights."

Honourable senators, he was a dear friend and colleague, and without his support and that of his partner in life, Karen, I would not be standing here today delivering this speech.

To Karen, Sarah, Matthew, Christina and his family, deepest sympathies from Maygan and me, as we celebrate his life at the Immanuel Pentecostal Church tomorrow in Winnipeg. As the warrior said in the movie as they carried the gladiator out of the coliseum, "We will join you in heaven, but not just yet — not just yet."

Goodbye, my dear friend, goodbye. May God bless you forever and a day.

### THE LATE FRANCES LARACY, O.C.

**Hon. Nancy Ruth:** Honourable senators, blood pudding — Frances Laracy made me eat it, and I loved her forever.

On August 8, 2011, a powerful voice for women's causes in Canada fell silent, but her legacy will live on in the hearts and minds of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada and beyond. Frances Laracy, advocate, mentor and recognized leader, who had a profound and widespread impact on women's issues, passed away at age 92 in her home in Conception Harbour, Newfoundland.

Frances was a past national and provincial president of the Canadian Women's Institutes. She was inducted as a lifelong member and voting delegate of the Associated Country Women of the World in 1980. In recognition of working with perseverance and passion for women's issues and equality, Frances was awarded the Queen's Jubilee medal in 1997 and the Persons Award in 1987, and was invested a Member of the Order of Canada in 1992. Frances was a voting delegate at seven international conferences throughout the world. At the age of 77, she was a delegate to the Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing in 1995.

• (1340)

Throughout her life of volunteerism, Francis raised a family of six children, ran a successful family business, Laracy's General Store, for 60 years, where I bought the hip waders that I still wear every year when I put in my water pipe. She faced adversity with strength and patience, losing her husband, Jack, in 1969 and a daughter in 1949, and battling breast cancer in 1965 and in 1985.

Frances had a passionate commitment to education and attained a degree from Memorial University when she was in her seventies. Her lifelong dream was fulfilled. This drive for

education became a desire to improve the economic and social conditions for women in her community, province, country, and throughout the world.

Francis believed a solution could be found to any problem. Her kitchen was always open; her teapot was never empty. She went to university in her seventies, was still making three-bean salad for 200 people in her eighties, wrote skits as needed and, like a true Newfoundlander, Frances "never went to bed the same day she got up."

### CANADIAN PARENTS FOR FRENCH

#### MANITOBA CHAPTER

**Hon. Maria Chaput:** Honourable senators, on Saturday, October 1, in Winnipeg, I attended the annual general meeting of Canadian Parents for French, Manitoba Chapter.

Canadian Parents for French - Manitoba is part of a national network of volunteers who are dedicated to the promotion and creation of French second language learning opportunities for young Canadians. They have been instrumental in the growth and development of French second language programs in Manitoba since their incorporation in 1981.

Their vision statement is the following:

A Manitoba where French and English speaking people live together in mutual respect with an understanding and appreciation of each other's language and culture, and where linguistic duality forms an integral part of society to support the vision of a bilingual Canada.

Their slogan this year is "Proud of Two Languages — Nos deux langues, notre fierté."

[Translation]

Thank you to Canadian Parents for French - Manitoba. You are a model and an inspiration for everyone.

[English]

### HONOURABLE SENATOR DAVID BRALEY

#### CONGRATULATIONS ON INDUCTION TO CANADIAN FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

**Hon. David Tkachuk:** Honourable senators, as many of you will have heard by now, our good friend and colleague, Senator David Braley, will next September be inducted into the Canadian Football Hall of Fame. If anyone deserves to be in the hall, it is Mr. Braley. When Damon Allen, one of the greatest players to ever play the Canadian game, says that, you know the honour is well deserved.

When someone like Damon Allen refers to him as "Mister," you get a general indication of the kind of esteem and respect in which this man is held, not just by those who wear the suits in the league, but also by those who wear the uniforms.



Senator Braley is some kind of rare individual. He is being inducted as a builder — a category I understand he did not even know existed — but the more appropriate term would be “saviour.” He stepped in to buy the Hamilton Tiger Cats in the 1980s when no one else would. He lost money and saved the team. He stepped away a few years later, once his team was stabilized, and thought that would be the end of it. He thought he had done his civic duty.

He stepped in again in 1997 to rescue the floundering B.C. Lions franchise. This time the commitment was long term, but the results were the same: The Tiger Cats are among the league’s most formidable franchises three years running. They have new ownership, along with a new stadium in the making. As for the Lions, they are hosting the Grey Cup this year in the beautiful BC Place Stadium. They, too, are one of the better teams in the league.

Now the focus is on the beleaguered Toronto Argonauts. Senator Braley is approaching the revitalization of that team with the same determination and focus he showed with the others. He is to be congratulated for his efforts over the last 25 years or more, and among CFL fans he should be celebrated as much or more than anyone else in the hall of fame.

I can tell honourable senators that if it were not for David Braley, some of those who are there now would never have had the opportunity to be, much less to play the sport, in Canada in the first place. The CFL is his national institution. His fans, and I include myself among them, owe a deep and abiding debt to David Braley for his selfless efforts to keep it going when no one else would.

Join me, honourable senators, in congratulating him on his pending induction into the Canadian Football Hall of Fame.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Jean-Claude Rivest:** Honourable senators, certainly that is good news for Senator Braley, but the bad news is that the Montreal Alouettes will win the Grey Cup again this year.

[Translation]

## QUEBEC DELEGATION IN PARIS

### FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

**Hon. Jean-Claude Rivest:** Honourable senators, I would like to draw your attention to an extremely important event that took place at the beginning of the month. The Premier of Quebec travelled to France to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Délégation générale du Québec in Paris and the direct and special relationship between Quebec and France.

I would like to remind this chamber that these harmonious relations between Quebec and France developed as a result of the initiative of the Premier at the time, the Honourable Jean Lesage, as well as the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Canada, Lester B. Pearson, who bestowed special diplomatic status on

Quebec. The cooperation between France and Quebec is France’s most important foreign relationship. Suffice it to say that thousands of people from Quebec and France cross the Atlantic on their way to Paris or Montreal every day.

This cooperation is found in all spheres of activity, including the university and research sectors, and among youth. Many young people from France are studying in Quebec and many Quebec youth are studying in France.

I would like to point out that in the 1980s the incredible success of this cooperation made it possible for the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, the Prime Minister at the time, with the participation of the Government of Quebec, to host the Francophonie summits. It also made it possible for French-speaking Canadians, through an agreement signed by the governments of Quebec and France, to give the provinces of New Brunswick and Ontario official status and seats within La Francophonie.

This event is important to francophones in Quebec and Canada. But it is also important to recognize the battle of the entire French-speaking community — along with public opinion and all other Canadians — to affirm and strengthen the linguistic duality of our country, which is one of the fundamental characteristics of our federation.

I believe that the vision of two great prime ministers of Canada — Lester B. Pearson and Brian Mulroney — and the participation of the Government of Quebec and the Canadian Francophonie, especially in Acadia, has allowed Canada to live and now to affirm, in an exemplary manner, the presence of Canada as a nation and an integral part of the global Francophonie.

It is important to celebrate this anniversary.

[English]

## THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

### BICENTENNIAL OF BIRTH IN 2015

**Hon. Michael Duffy:** Honourable senators, I rise today to note it has been a promising fall for those of us who believe Canada’s rich history is worth celebrating. This is particularly true when it comes to our first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. With the bicentennial of Sir John A.’s birth fast approaching in 2015, the role of Macdonald in creating Canada is finally receiving the recognition it is due.

Journalist Richard Gwyn has just published the second volume of his masterful series on the life of Sir John A., *Nation Maker*. Congratulations are due Mr. Gwyn for the years he has spent researching and writing this first full-length biography of Sir John A. to appear since the 1950s.

Based on Mr. Gwyn’s impressive work this fall, we have seen *John A.: Birth of a Country*, a two-hour political thriller recently broadcast by CBC.

Bernie Zukerman and his team deserve high marks for this impressive movie; they make history come alive.



• (1350)

To quote a review in the *Kingston Whig-Standard*, it was “brilliant but flawed.” According to the *Standard*, the flaw belongs, not surprisingly, to CBC management. Only in Canada, it seems, would the nation’s public broadcaster not fully commit to completing a series about our founding Prime Minister on the eve of his bicentennial.

CBC entered the film about Macdonald at 1864, leaving out important parts of his story, such as the building of the CPR and even Confederation itself.

I know all honourable senators will join me in encouraging the CBC to do what Sir John A. himself did: finish the project.

## NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

### BENEFITS OF FIBRE OPTIC LINK PROJECT

**Hon. Nick G. Sibbeston:** Honourable senators, I have spoken several times about the value of development in the Mackenzie River Valley, both the proposed gas pipeline and the highway from Wrigley to Inuvik. Today, I would like to mention another project, a fibre optic link connection.

Last year, the Inuvik Satellite Station Facility opened with the commissioning of two satellite dishes. Inuvik sits at one point of a triangle that includes similar stations in Europe and Russia. It is therefore an ideal place for the gathering of satellite information — such as environmental or geoscience monitoring — an area in which Canada is a world leader.

However, for this facility to reach its full potential, it must be linked to the South with high-speed data transmission to provide government and business with real-time data. A fibre optic link is the best way to do this. The expansion of the facility would be a tremendous benefit to the economy of Inuvik and the North.

A fibre optic link would also permit an incredible improvement in the provision of education and telehealth services to the six communities that lie along the route — seven, if an extension to Tuktoyaktuk were built at the same time.

The potential for economic development from a high-speed Internet connection is also considerable, contributing to the well-being and prosperity of communities that often struggle to make ends meet.

Unlike the other megaprojects that I have spoken about, which would require huge investments and many years to complete, a fibre optic link could be finished by 2015, including necessary environmental reviews, and for less than \$70 million. Because both business and government would benefit, it would be an ideal private-public partnership.

I understand that the Government of the Northwest Territories has made application to PPP Canada for this idea, and I urge the federal government to support it.

## DISTINGUISHED VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I would like to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of two of our former colleagues, the Honourable Lucie Pépin and the Honourable Aurélien Gill.

Also in the gallery, honourable senators, are members of the National House of Prayer, visiting from Manitoba, and to whom I extend on your behalf a warm welcome. They are guests of the Honourable Senator Plett.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

#### REPORT PURSUANT TO RULE 104 TABLED

**Hon. Terry Stratton:** Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 104 of the *Rules of the Senate*, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Conflict of Interest for Senators, which deals with the expenses incurred by the committee during the Third Session of the Fortieth Parliament and the Intersessional Authority.

(For text of report, see today’s Journals of the Senate, p. 255.)

[Translation]

### ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

#### REGIONAL ASSEMBLY AND CONFERENCE OF BRANCH CHAIRS OF AMERICA REGION, AUGUST 22 TO 26, 2011—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Andrée Champagne:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF), respecting its participation at the XXVIIIth Regional Assembly and at the Conference of Branch Chairs of the America Region of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF), held in Regina, Saskatchewan, from August 22 to 26, 2011.

[English]

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

#### NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO REFER DOCUMENTS FROM PREVIOUS SESSION AND INTERSESSIONAL AUTHORITY

**Hon. Terry Stratton:** Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the papers and documents received and/or produced by the Committee on Conflict of Interest for Senators during the Third Session of the Fortieth Parliament, and Intersessional Authority be referred to the Committee on Conflict of Interest for Senators.



NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE  
TO MEET DURING SITTINGS OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Terry Stratton:** Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, for the duration of the current session, the Standing Committee on Conflict of Interest for Senators be authorized to sit even though the Senate may be sitting and that rule 95(4) be suspended in relation thereto.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### HEALTH

#### SUICIDE PREVENTION

**Hon. Jim Munson:** Honourable senators, sometimes there are questions that are tougher to ask than other questions here in the Senate. I am sure that folks on the other side, on our side and all across the country are trying to come to terms with a real tough question, and that is the issue of suicide.

Today, in this particular city, there is a sad story taking place concerning a young man and his funeral. He was bullied because of his homosexuality, and he took his own life.

You can be anything you want to be in this country. You can be a fighter in the National Hockey League and you can be alone with your thoughts. However, as a nation, I believe we still have to try to come up with answers to those tough questions regarding people who are struggling and who decide to end their lives.

Last week, members in the other place gave near unanimous support to a motion calling on the government to establish a national suicide prevention strategy. My question to the Leader of the Government in the Senate is whether she might tell us what steps the government is taking to implement a national suicide prevention strategy.

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, first, may I share Senator Munson's words of sympathy to the family of Mr. Hubley. What happened to their son is a terrible tragedy. When things like this happen, it makes one ask: What are we doing with our kids and what are we doing about bullying? It is a terrible situation.

• (1400)

I am well aware of the support for the motion of the honourable senator's counterpart in the House of Commons. Obviously, this issue cuts across all party lines, and all walks and stations of life, rich or poor. No one escapes. As a result, too many families have had to suffer the anguish, including political families. As honourable senators know, a few years ago, a member of Parliament from Saskatchewan committed suicide. It was a very sad case.

As a government, we have provided significant funding. We have established the Mental Health Commission of Canada, headed up by our former colleague, the Honourable Michael Kirby. We have supported special programs for mental health matters in Aboriginal communities. In 2010 we invested, in the Aboriginal community, \$75 million for the National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy.

With regard to the specific question about further steps the government is planning to take, honourable senators, I will be happy to take that portion of the Senator Munson's question as notice and respond as quickly as possible.

**Senator Munson:** I thank the leader and appreciate that answer from the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

I guess sometimes, as a nation or as folks, there is a hesitancy, even in this great world of communications, to talk collectively about this serious issue. We have a tendency to talk as families, and then we have a tendency to react to it by saying, "Is that not sad," and we move on.

The leader is right, in that we, the Senate, should be proud of the work that happened here through the mental health commission. However, I think there is more than, "Let's talk." I think it is, "Let's do more."

Is there a way that all parties — our side of the house and the official opposition in the other house and others — perhaps with the Prime Minister, could have a national discussion, not necessarily to get to the root cause, because we will never understand, but to show more compassion and reach out more in this regard while leaving the politics at home?

**Senator LeBreton:** I thank the honourable senator for that question, and I could not agree more.

All honourable senators know the story. There are many of us here who were part of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology when we did the health care study and subsequently launched into the mental health study. Every single one of us around the table knew all of the physical illnesses of various members of our family. I knew about Senator Kirby's wife's struggle with cancer; he knew about my husband's struggle with heart disease.

However, when the committee started to talk about mental health on a personal level, every single one of us had members of our immediate family that had been touched by mental illness. As a result of that study, and the work of former Senator Kirby and the commission, we are making some headway, though not nearly enough, in terms of removing the stigma. There are many miles to go.

I agree with Senator Munson. Anything that parliamentarians can do collectively to move this issue forward to more meaningful solutions, I would fully support. I thank the honourable senator for his suggestion, and I will inform my colleagues, not only in the Department of Health but in other areas of government that deal with the mental health issue on the basis of their portfolios.



[Translation]

## NATIONAL DEFENCE

### MENTAL HEALTH OF ARMED FORCES MEMBERS

**Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire:** Honourable senators, when I was commander of the brigade in Valcartier in the 1990s, we were in Bosnia and had received instructions not to publicize suicides or, in fact, any deaths in Bosnia. The government did not want that information known. It wanted to minimize the impact of missions where members of the Armed Forces were killed or injured.

In continuation of yesterday's debate and in light of the known impact of these missions on our soldiers and their families, I wonder whether the government would consider specifically approaching the Minister of Defence and, by extension, cabinet, to ensure that those who committed suicide as a result of a psychological wound from a mission overseas are recognized the same way as the more than 157 other individuals who lost their lives during the mission.

[English]

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government):** I thank the Honourable Senator Dallaire for that question. I realize that in the past governments did not want it reported that people had actually died in conflict in Bosnia. That was a mistake. Times have changed significantly since then. Stress and mental health issues with regard to our soldiers are something that the government takes seriously.

As the honourable senator knows, we have doubled from five to ten the number of operational stress injury clinics that provide services to veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. We have set up 24 new integrated personnel support centres, which bring together a number of important Veterans Affairs and Canadian Forces services. We have opened two new computer-assisted rehabilitation environment systems to help rehabilitate Canadian Forces personnel with both physical and mental injuries. We provide 24/7 counselling service and medical advice through the CF's Member Assistance Program.

Again, honourable senators, there is always more that can be done, but I do believe that steps have been taken and will continue to be taken, to paraphrase our own report here, to take these issues out of the shadows and deal with them head-on in a concerted effort to ensure that our soldiers suffering from these mental health illnesses, or physical injuries for that matter, are helped and dealt with properly.

**Senator Dallaire:** Those who are injured physically and die subsequently from their wounds are recognized. I am asking that those who take their own lives because of a psychological wound also be recognized officially as casualties of the conflict.

The Afghanistan conflict is still ongoing in the minds of many, and will be for years to come. As an example, on one base in this province alone last month, there were four suicides.

I ask the leader to approach either cabinet, the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Defence, or the Minister of Veterans Affairs, for that matter, to discuss whether or not we should

consider as part of the casualty list those who take their lives due to a mental injury, operational stress injury from operations overseas.

**Senator LeBreton:** I will certainly be happy, honourable senators, to pass that suggestion on to my colleague the Minister of National Defence. The privacy of the individual families is also involved here, but I will pass that on to my colleague.

## LABOUR

### GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN LABOUR DISPUTES

**Hon. Art Eggleton:** Honourable senators, lately the government has been wading into employer-union discussions with Air Canada employees.

*The Globe and Mail* said on this matter:

The federal government's explanation for its intervention in the labour dispute between Air Canada and its flight attendants — that the global economy remains fragile . . . does not amount to a coherent policy.

That is true. It is not a coherent policy; it appears to be ad hoc.

• (1410)

No one wants a work stoppage, especially if they are planning to fly Air Canada, but no one wants their rights taken away, either. The government should be protecting workers' rights, not taking them away. By asking the Canada Industrial Relations Board to determine whether a disruption of service at Air Canada would pose a health and safety risk to the public, the minister is, I would suggest, using the board and its function inappropriately.

Will the government step back and allow Air Canada and its employees the opportunity to exercise their rights to negotiate?

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, that is exactly what the government did, and Air Canada and the unions negotiated twice and came to an agreement. The membership then did not agree with the settlement that the union agreed to.

It is quite clear, and I think this view is broadly supported, that a major disruption of Air Canada would have a serious impact on the Canadian economy.

As the honourable senator mentioned, the matter has been referred to the Canada Industrial Relations Board. Therefore, because the matter is before the board, I am not in a position to comment further.

**Senator Eggleton:** What will the future policy be with respect to these kinds of disputes? This is the second time that the government has gotten into the matter with Air Canada employees; there could be others in the transportation sector. Not all of them are considered essential services. I agree they are



important services and a long disruption could be a problem. However, the government has been stepping in quickly on these kinds of things and not giving the parties an opportunity to negotiate.

What will the policy of the government be in the future? Will it continue on an ad hoc basis, or will it develop a coherent policy?

**Senator LeBreton:** The honourable senator is obviously referring to the actions of the government during the postal work interruptions and the strike of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. Again, that was a damaging situation. Many small businesses were impacted directly. Allowing it to go on would have been detrimental to the Canadian economy, and Parliament acted. All of us supported the back-to-work legislation.

With regard to the government's general view, of course the government believes in the collective bargaining process.

[Translation]

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

### PROMOTING LINGUISTIC DUALITY

**Hon. Maria Chaput:** Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate and has to do with how the likely budget cuts could affect official language minority communities.

We have learned that senior officials have been instructed to reduce spending in their respective departments by anywhere from 5 per cent to 10 per cent. I am not criticizing the decision, for it is necessary because of the current fragile economic situation.

However, such an approach could disproportionately harm certain programs that are under the responsibility of several departments simultaneously. For instance, consider the federal government's *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality*, which forms the basis of all funding programs for official language minority communities and whose costs are paid for by 13 agencies and departments, which have all been instructed to reduce their spending by between 5 per cent and 10 per cent.

There is nothing to prevent official language minority communities from losing not just 5 per cent or 10 per cent of their budgets, but rather 30 per cent, 40 per cent, or even more. What would happen if all the agencies and departments involved in the Roadmap, or even several of them, decided to reach their budget reduction targets in that manner?

Has the government thought of a way to ensure that the budget cuts will not be done in such a way that disproportionately targets a program like the Roadmap for Linguistic Duality?

[English]

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, I cannot imagine a situation where when we go through the process we would somehow or other agree to something that would have a severe impact on the important work and the commitment we made to the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality.

[ Senator Eggleton ]

As the honourable senator knows, the government has promised to balance the budget by 2015. We have been clear that everyone must do their part. I wish to assure the honourable senator that we will continue to work with official languages organizations to ensure that they have the resources they need to fulfil their mandates and carry out the important work they do.

I cannot imagine that any of us who are dealing with the recommendations of the various departments would allow a situation to develop where a specific program that supports and enhances our official languages policy would be unduly affected by the savings that we are looking for in the various departments.

[Translation]

**Senator Chaput:** As the report of the Commissioner of Official Languages showed and as the minister herself admitted in this chamber, a number of departments still do not understand that they have an obligation to promote linguistic duality.

Knowing that, it is not unreasonable to believe that a number of these departments might look at in their roadmap commitments to find the fat they need to trim. It is not part of the reality or culture of these departments because it is simply not something they think about. They do not realize their obligations.

Since some departments still do not understand the importance of linguistic duality, will the government monitor the proposed budgetary cuts in order to ensure that they will not have disproportionate repercussions on the Roadmap for the communities that depend on this source of funding?

[English]

**Senator LeBreton:** As the Commissioner of Official Languages pointed out, significant progress has been made.

Again, honourable senators, I do not believe that those of us who sit on the committee of Treasury Board reviewing the recommendations from various departments would allow any government department to try to find savings disproportionately at the expense of any one group, in particular with regard to official languages, which is the law of the land. The government, by its actions, is fully committed to it.

## HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

### RETIREMENT INCOME SECURITY

**Hon. Joseph A. Day:** Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. It relates to employment security and retirement security, particularly in light of recent announcements. Recently, it was announced that \$226 million is to be cut from the Veterans Affairs budget, which will undoubtedly have an impact on employment.

Yesterday, over 100 employees of ACOA, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, an agency extremely important to Atlantic Canada, received letters of termination. That is in the public sector and we know a lot more is coming in that regard, honourable senators.



As well, in the private sector, 2,500 jobs will be eliminated by Maple Leaf Foods over the next two years.

Specifically with respect to retirement security, the government has floated a proposed solution to the increased worries of Canadians regarding their retirement income in what is called a "pooled registered pension plan." This solution, however, has proven to be of very high cost for very little return. Australia has a similar program, which has shown that despite more money being put in by the individual, the returns are mediocre at best. Employers in this pooled registered pension plan are not required to pay into the program and, therefore, it is not really a pension at all; it is a retirement savings plan that is being proposed. It is not a defined benefit like the pension that many of us here will be pleased to receive. We will know what we will be receiving. It is not a defined benefit; whatever is in the account at the time you start drawing is what you get.

• (1420)

The Canada Pension Plan, however, currently protects the individual from inflation and lasts for the lifetime of the contributor, unlike this pooled pension plan.

Now that this idea has been floated for a couple of years by the federal government, can the minister tell us that this ill-advised scheme has been abandoned by the government?

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, with regard to the pooled registered pension plan, no, we have not abandoned it. We are working with the provinces. We have studied proposals for further improvements.

By the way, there has been considerable support from the provinces for this type of registered pension plan because this plan will provide low-cost pension plans to millions of people who had no plan before. We do not throw out the good in search of the perfect.

With regard to the cuts that the honourable senator referred to at ACOA, like every other agency and department of government, ACOA has undertaken a spending review to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are spent wisely. ACOA themselves identified the efficiencies that will result in the elimination of 42 positions. Employees affected by these decisions will have access to provisions under the workforce adjustment program to help them transition to new jobs and training.

Like all these decisions made by these various agencies, in no way will this affect the services or access to ACOA programs that have been so helpful to small business and Atlantic Canadian communities.

With regard to Veterans Affairs, I wish to assure the honourable senator, as I assured the Honourable Senator Dallaire, that there will be no cuts to benefits for veterans. As in all of these cases, we have people looking for efficiencies and savings. Finding efficiencies and savings does not mean that we will not be providing the same good service to the people of Canada.

By the way, I think the announcement yesterday with regard to Halifax was a great day.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

**Senator LeBreton:** It was a great day not only for Halifax but for the entire Atlantic region and, indeed, for the whole country. There will be many opportunities to benefit from the program because, as honourable senators know, the primary focus of our government has been for some time and will continue to be jobs and the economy. Revitalizing and having our shipbuilding industry come back to good strength in building ships and providing jobs in Canada will undoubtedly assist all Canadians, but, most particularly, in Atlantic Canada.

**Senator Day:** I look forward to contracts being let under the proposed scheme that was announced yesterday. I will deal with the employment issues at a later time.

Honourable senators, in my supplementary question I would like to focus on the issue of retirement security. My understanding is that the provinces were told when they met with officials from the Department of Finance that the federal government will only consider this pooled registered pension plan as the only alternative additional pension plan. The provinces clearly recognized that something must be done.

The Canada Pension Plan is a program that has worked very well. If we were to create a supplemental account to the current Canada Pension Plan, all contributions could come on a voluntary basis from employees and employers. It would, therefore, be an honest-to-goodness pension plan and could continue to rely on the low administrative costs that that system has shown it can produce.

Canada's pension investment system has proven to be among the best in the world. I know the honourable leader knows that. Similar models to the pooled registered pension plan have been shown to be ineffective investment tools.

I ask again: Will the Government of Canada stop taking risks with the quality of life of our retired citizens and implement a supplemental account to the Canada Pension Plan based on the system that we know works very well?

**Senator LeBreton:** I cannot let the honourable senator get away with describing that massive, monumental job-creation announcement yesterday as a "scheme." I think it is quite something to describe that announcement as a scheme.

**An Hon. Senator:** Oh, oh.

**Senator LeBreton:** Yes, he did say "scheme."

Canada Pension Plan reforms continue to be examined by the federal and provincial governments. However, we and many of the provinces — and I am sure many of us here as well — share concerns about increasing costs of the CPP, especially when the economy is so fragile.

I dare say, honourable senators, that Senator Day is also incorrect in saying that we have abandoned our seniors. We work hard and have worked hard to improve retirement security for Canadians. We cut taxes for seniors and pensioners by over \$2 billion annually, including pension income-splitting, increasing the age limit for maturing pensions and RRSPs to 71 from 69, and



twice increasing the age credit amount. In 2009, we reformed the framework governing federally regulated pensions to better protect pensioners.

It is quite incorrect and unfair to say that we are not taking all steps possible to ensure the income security of our seniors.

**Senator Day:** First, the honourable minister has suggested that there is something underhanded in the use of the term “scheme.” If so, I withdraw that. It is a strategy that was announced and I fully support the strategy. The point I am trying to make is that no contracts were let yesterday and we look forward to contracts being let under that particular strategy.

Second, I did not say that the government had abandoned citizens, senior citizens in particular. I do not like the leader suggesting that I did say that. What I suggested is a way that they might improve their attention to senior citizens.

[Translation]

#### DELAYED ANSWER TO ORAL QUESTION

**Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table the answer to a question raised by Senator Callbeck on September 27, 2011, concerning Human Resources and Skills Development, access to Service Canada.

#### HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

##### ACCESS TO SERVICE CANADA

(Response to question raised by Hon. Catherine S. Callbeck on September 27, 2011)

These are challenging economic times and our government is working hard, on behalf of Canadians, towards eliminating the deficit, returning to balanced budgets and improving the services we deliver. Canadians expect their hard-earned tax dollars to be used as effectively and efficiently as possible and our government is committed to delivering programs and services that are aligned with the priorities of Canadians and financially sustainable over the long term.

Although considerable progress to improve EI processing has been made over the past few years through modernization and automation efforts, there is significant opportunity for us to be much more cost effective and efficient in our operations. As a result, Service Canada is introducing a new service delivery model for the administrative processing of EI applications and claims.

There are hundreds of Service Canada offices across the country and currently, within 120 of those, EI applications and claims are processed. Over the next three years, we will improve how EI claims are processed with further automation and where we complete this processing by consolidating the 120 sites into 22 of our existing offices across the country.

Each of the 22 sites was chosen following a careful review, where both national and regional perspectives were taken into consideration. This is a national program and many factors were considered such as, among others, existing labour force, skill availability, bilingual capability, and real estate.

It is important to note that no Service Canada offices will close as a result of this initiative and there will be no impact to in-person services offered to Canadians at Service Canada locations. That includes the offices in Montague, Charlottetown, O’Leary, Souris and Summerside. These changes are only pertinent to the administrative processing of EI claims and where that takes place.

There will be changes to the number of employees involved in EI processing as a result of these measures. However, no further details are available at this time as we are focused on rolling this initiative out to Service Canada employees and beginning the work of planning for this implementation.

A Workforce Management Strategy is in place to minimize impacts to employees and to manage staffing requirements, which will primarily be through attrition, reassignment and training for different roles. All changes will occur within the parameters of the collective agreement.

• (1430)

[English]

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### STUDY ON ISSUES RELATING TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT’S CURRENT AND EVOLVING POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING FISHERIES AND OCEANS

##### THIRD REPORT OF FISHERIES AND OCEANS COMMITTEE AND REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the third report (interim) of the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans entitled: *Report on the Implementation of the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act*, tabled in the Senate on October 6, 2011.

**Hon. Fabian Manning:** Honourable senators, I would like to say a few words on the third report on the implementation of the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act. This study was conducted by the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans and presented earlier this month to the Senate. Once again, I want to take the opportunity to thank all members of the committee who participated in the study, and certainly our former chair, Senator Bill Rompkey, who brought a wealth of experience to the discussion and certainly raised the profile, through the committee, of the concern that has been brought forward by many people throughout Canada in relation to the historic lighthouses that dot our country from coast to coast to coast.



Turning to the purpose of the study, we had heard of a major de-staffing plan by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and part of that de-staffing would involve many of the lighthouses and the facilities around them that were on a surplus list prepared for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. As a matter of fact, at the time, 541 lighthouses were on the department's surplus list. Many of these buildings were of great significance to our country, containing some great history, and many of them were at risk. This was why the committee was asked to have a look into their conditions and what could be done to save them. Though some of these lighthouses were national historic sites, they still made the surplus list of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and that certainly raised some concerns.

We had great representation from across the country by individuals, groups, organizations, municipalities, members of provincial governments, members of tourism groups and members of different community organizations that were taken up with the long term potential loss if, for example, one or a number of their lighthouses were taken down and destroyed. They put in place a mechanism, through the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act, whereby individuals and groups throughout the country could petition the minister to have a particular lighthouse turned over to a community group or organization to be taken care of, maintained and used for whatever purpose the department deemed they could use it for.

There has been a great concern in relation to the number of individuals or organizations that have come forward looking for lighthouses in their areas. As of February 17 of this year, we only had about 40 requests for approximately 600 possible sites throughout Canada. In talking to some of the individuals who have been pushing forward their concerns for the lighthouses, in the forefront of their concerns was the fact that many of these lighthouses and buildings are very much in a state of decay. Many of them are in need of repair work. Some face environmental issues with regard to the grounds and the buildings themselves.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans did not want to put up funding to bring the lighthouses up to modern-day standards. They would address some immediate concerns and some emergency issues but not necessarily assist in any way. They said they did not have the funding.

We talked to Parks Canada. Again, if it was deemed to be a national historic site, there were opportunities through Heritage Canada to obtain funding but not necessarily through Parks Canada or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Many of these buildings have been left to fall down or into a state of disrepair because there was a feeling within some parts of the department that the de-staffing would happen and that these lighthouses would go by the wayside.

However, as we know through a report that I presented to the chamber yesterday, many of the lighthouse keepers have been kept in place in both British Columbia and in Newfoundland and Labrador, and some of the facilities they operate out of in those two provinces need repair and maintenance. It is a concern.

For those that do not fall into that category, the concern is about who will spearhead an effort for the preservation of the

lighthouses. The Heritage Canada Foundation proposed to our committee at an earlier time that we put in place a program that could be called "Save Canada's Lighthouses Fund." Again, we did not have any take up with departments of government but we are still working on some things there. Such a foundation would certainly appear to be an ideal vehicle to spearhead a national fundraising campaign. They have an organization in place, and they look at heritage structures throughout the country. There is no doubt in my mind, after hearing from the foundation at the committee level and I am sure I echo the comments of many members of the committee, that they will need some type of help to be able to get that effort off the ground.

The minister has until May 29, 2015, to designate lighthouses to community groups or individuals. That is an ongoing process, and we hope that more people will get interested in those structures. There is a great cultural side to many of these lighthouses, stories of saving lives and participating in marine disasters. Much of our heritage and our culture is tied to the lighthouses. They are icons in many places in our provinces, and certainly to watch them fall by the wayside is something that concerns us all.

Committee members are fully aware, as I am sure Canadians are, that we will not be going out and saving or repairing all of the lighthouses, especially ones that have not been used for many years. We have places now where the lighthouse structure itself has been replaced by a light and they do not have any staff. There are places that we would not be able to restore. Some places are in such a state of disrepair that it is just not fathomable to put forward money to address the concerns.

However, there are some places, such as Cape Spear in Newfoundland and Labrador, or Cape Bonavista, which are national historic sites. We hope that some of the other lighthouses throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, throughout Canada for that matter, especially in British Columbia, will be designated national historic sites. Then they would fall under the auspices of Heritage Canada, which hopefully would be able to put some money in place to assist.

I want to touch on a couple of recommendations that were brought forward. At the end of this report are 10 recommendations. I will not read all of them today, but I will touch on a couple that I feel are important.

• (1440)

The first recommendation is:

The Committee recommends that, given their economic, heritage, cultural and historical value, the Government of Canada adopt as a general national policy goal the preservation of a reasonable proportion of Canada's lighthouses for future generations of Canadians.

That is what I was talking about a few moments ago. We will not be able to repair or maintain all the lighthouses, but we want to have a national policy that will look at a reasonable proportion of lighthouses as sites of national historic significance, and we will be able to address that through Heritage Canada.



The second recommendation is:

The Committee recommends that all lighthouses passed on to community groups be maintained in a good state of repair and in a condition that will allow economical ongoing maintenance. All environmental issues should be addressed prior to the transfer of any such lighthouses.

That is one of the main issues we touched on during our committee hearings. There are many groups and organizations that would like to take over the lighthouses, but they are in a state of major disrepair, and some small communities just do not have the funding to enable them to do that.

Parks Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans need to work together to set out priorities and identify for the public lighthouses that could be made heritage structures so that, hopefully, we can save some of these buildings that have national historic significance.

Honourable senators, I am pleased to present the report today. I want to thank everyone involved, especially those who travelled to Ottawa and told us of their concerns. It is a big issue. Our country is known for its use of the waterways, and lighthouses play an important part in the safety of our mariners. They have also played an important part in our past. The history and stories associated with some of our lighthouses tell the story of Canada, of our provinces and of people coming to this country. They tell of all the heartache and hardship experienced due to shipwrecks, but they were a beacon of hope for people on the water, as they are for many other parts of the country.

Honourable senators, the committee studied the report on the implementation of the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act that was tabled in the Third Session of the Fortieth Parliament. The report was placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at a future time, but with the dissolution of Parliament the matter was never debated. The committee once again studied the report and adopted the document without change.

I think I speak on behalf of all honourable senators involved in the study when I say that the implementation of the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act was an important subject to the committee in the past Parliament and remains of great importance to its members in this session. The members of the committee wish to receive a response from the government on the report and its recommendations.

Therefore, I move:

That the report be adopted and that, pursuant to rule 131(2), the Senate request a complete and detailed response from the government, with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans being identified as the minister responsible for responding to the report, in consultation with the Minister responsible for Parks Canada.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[Translation]

## LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

### FIRST REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEE— DEBATE ADJOURNED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the first report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament (*mandate of the committee and quorum*), presented in the Senate on October 4, 2011.

**Hon. Grant Mitchell:** Honourable senators, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak for a few minutes about technology and its use in the chamber and in our daily work. Technology allows us to be more economical and more efficient.

[English]

Honourable senators, I wanted to take the opportunity to discuss the question of the use of technology, and there is an implication for that with respect to libraries, so I thought I would use this report as the reason for making some of these points.

I do this in the context of what I believe to be some excellent progress amongst our colleagues and the administration as we edge our way into the 21st century of modern technology. More and more we are beginning to see real progress. Just last week we saw the official kick-off of some new websites for committees. I have looked at those and I am very impressed and very pleased with the look of them and their utility. Of course, more work needs to be done with respect to a number of items with the possibility, for example, of being able to reference material easily and quickly in Hansard and so on, but it is a very positive step.

We have been given permission to utilize our budgets to buy tablets. We have some great pioneers of that. Senator Finley bought a tablet himself. He probably lined up to get it the first day they came out. He swears by them. I have bought one, as have others, and more and more are buying them.

There is more and more website usage by senators. I recently looked at an electronic newsletter on the website of Senator Wallin. It is an excellent newsletter, very detailed, informative and engaging. All of this is exceptional.

The Senate has announced that it is tweeting. I do not quite know how that works, but it sounds and looks impressive. Under the leadership and guidance of Senator Angus, the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources took the initiative of creating a special stand-alone website for our report on a Canadian energy strategy in order to highlight that in the minds of Canadians and give them the chance to see what we are doing and, more important, to give them the chance to tell us what we should be doing and to respond and react to what we are doing. That is very positive.

Also, because our communications person, Ceri Au, announced on Twitter the one-year anniversary of that website, we were retweeted by Kady O'Malley, who has 15,000 followers, so now many more Canadians are aware of how cutting-edge the Senate is, particularly Senator Angus' Committee on Energy and the Environment. This is all very good.



I want to encourage that and congratulate the staff and senators who have been pushing that and have created the environment within which we can make this kind of progress.

The Speaker is looking at me sideways and wondering if I will ever get to libraries. As a matter of fact, I will. There are implications for libraries in the context of technology.

Our library is one of the most remarkable in the country and probably in the world. It is one of the most beautiful institutions in the country and certainly in the world. It provides excellent support, information and data management for us and the other place in our work. However, it does not provide us with electronic books. Imagine if we could borrow a book electronically on our iPad, PowerBook or Playbook. Imagine the advantages of that. First, it is just more convenient.

I know that there are people who have a romantic notion of books, paper and newspapers. I do not. I love to read my books on an electronic facility like an iPad or a Kindle. I do not want to emphasize one particular brand, but you know what I mean.

• (1450)

It is exceptionally convenient, when you travel as much as we do, to have 50 or 60 books in one place, as well as to be able to buy a book if you are sitting on the tarmac waiting to take off. Of course you cannot be rolling; they will not let you look.

For example, I was travelling one day with Senator Dallaire. We were sitting on the tarmac for some time waiting to take off, and I looked at him and said, "You know, Roméo, I haven't bought your book yet," and I said, "I'm going to do that right now." I called Kindle, bought the book and he said, "Am I on Kindle?" He had no idea that he was digital, but the fact is that it is very convenient.

It also is much cheaper to buy books electronically than it is to buy hardcover or even paperback books. Generally, the electronic book is at a discount. It is also much easier for a library to deliver the book. Sometimes I will ask for a book from the Library of Parliament, they will have two copies and I will wait months until those copies come available as they go down the list. With electronic bookings, I believe they are infinite. I do not think it is a huge problem to get an electronic book. In fact you do not even have to bother with someone to walk it over or deliver it. I think you can just press a button and it appears.

People will ask: How do you get rid of it? What if I get it and keep it? The fact of the matter is, amazingly, these books evaporate after a certain period of time, whatever the borrowing period would be. The same thing happens with movies. You rent a movie, you have 30 days to look at it and 48 hours after you start looking at it, and then it just evaporates magically.

I will list some of the advantages we would have if our Library of Parliament could provide us with digital books. We would save money. I am being selfish in this but it would be much more convenient to travel because you have this device instead of umpteen books in your briefcase. It would be far more efficient and reduce pressure on staff. Delivery staff could be used in other

more productive ways, more interesting ways. Did I say it would save money? Let me say that again: It would save money.

It would be very good if the Library of Parliament could look at that idea. I did mention the suggestion to a senior member of the Library of Parliament about a year ago, and immediately, it seemed to me, there was a negative response — cannot do that, there would be copyright issues and there would be this issue and that issue. No, there would not be. We are already doing it in the Edmonton Public Library. We can borrow music, and borrow videos so we can certainly loan books digitally out of the Library of Parliament.

Our Library of Parliament is a world-class institution and can provide unbelievable leadership. I would like to hear them saying that they will show the rest of this country and the rest of the world how to bring borrowing and lending practices into the 21st century and achieve all of those advantages that I have listed. I will not list them again. Honourable senators, that is what the Library of Parliament could do.

Speaking of saving money by going electronic the Library of Parliament provides us all kinds of data, papers and briefing notes for committees. We could have all of that on iPad or Playbook, absolutely. In fact, this summer a friend of mine sent me an article about how the Virginia State Senate, 44 of them, have all been given iPads. They get all of their briefings for committees — and believe it or not they pass hundreds and hundreds of bills in a session — and now they are getting major amounts of what was paper, for their sittings as well on their iPads.

To look at the volume of paper we have, honourable senators need only look under their desks. This is what I have accumulated in not a very long period of time. We have the Debates, Orders of the Day, Journals and bills. All of that is somewhere in the ether, or somewhere on some server, and it can all be put right into this iPad automatically. In fact, we can get some of it right now but it is just not very convenient.

The Virginia State Senate has a program to package a briefing book. You press a button, you press the screen, it opens and you just turn pages like any book. It is extremely efficient. If they make a mistake on a page, they just re-send. They do not even have to bother you. You do not have to staple it, you do not have to print it, you do not have to deliver it, you do not have to three-hole punch it, and you do not have to bang your knees on it every time you get to your desk. Even I have banged them and I am short. You have nothing but convenience and advantage.

Here we are trying to save money in the Senate. We are going to cut our travel and we do not think we have enough money to televise the Senate. We could save thousands upon thousands of dollars if we just got a program, and it exists, that would transfer data, briefing notes and all of this kind of paper that we receive, in a secure and efficient way.

Tablets are also being used — and I have not read extensively about it — in the Dutch legislature. For those of us who believe in free markets, it is also being used extensively in the private sector. I talked to a major corporation in Calgary that is doing this very



thing for their board of directors. They have about 20 directors and they save \$60,000 a year because their directors now have a tablet, and they get all of their material on that tablet.

Honourable senators, I draw this matter to your attention. This is again an area where we could be the cutting edge. Instead of people thinking we are kind of slow and tired, they would be coming to us and asking, "How did you do this?" We would be getting all kinds of coverage about how we modernized this great institution in an efficient way and saved money doing it. I am not talking pennies; I am talking thousands upon thousands of dollars. It will probably save on staff — not that I want to lay anyone off — but for sure we would be able to get staff doing more interesting things, and more productive things for the money that we pay them.

I also want to say that I raised this issue with Senator Stewart Olsen, who responded very favourably. I believe she is heading up a reduced paper initiative, and I think she has asked some staff to consider this as a possibility. This is not rocket science, believe it or not anymore; this can be done in about 15 seconds and I think we should, probably by the end of next week.

(On motion of Senator Tardif, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

## STUDY ON CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE OF FOREST SECTOR

### SECOND REPORT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY COMMITTEE—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Mockler, seconded by the Honourable Senator Wallace, for the adoption of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, entitled *The Canadian Forest Sector: A Future Based on Innovation*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on July 5, 2011.

**Hon. Fernand Robichaud:** Honourable senators, I still one of those who prefers to have a hard copy in front of them and, at the same time, I am showing my support for our forestry industry — nothing against the electronic industry, of course.

I am pleased to speak about the proposed motion to adopt the second report of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, entitled *The Canadian Forest Sector: A Future Based on Innovation*. We all know that the forestry industry has faced huge problems in recent years. A total of 120,000 jobs have been lost. We understand the extent of this situation and the considerable impact it has had on people and on the communities that have been built around the forest industry. This study makes it possible to provide an update on the companies involved in the development of this resource and to give renewed hope to the workers and communities that depend on the industry for their survival and growth.

We heard many witnesses: manufacturers, public servants, labour groups, business organizations, researchers and scientists.

We have witnessed first-hand all the energy expended by people in the sector to revive the forestry industry and help it become an economic force within our communities once again. With time and patience, the forestry industry will successfully redefine itself and will be able to look to a future based on innovation, as it says in the title of the report.

I want to draw your attention to some of the recommendations that I find particularly relevant and interesting for the Canadian forestry industry. Looking at the future, we must be realistic and candidly admit that we cannot change everything. However, nothing prevents us from acting as quickly as possible on the things we are able to change, thus beginning to turn things around and addressing any problems.

One important recommendation in this report is that training for architects and engineers include a mandatory course that would be dedicated to the use of wood as a building material in multi-storey residential and commercial buildings.

• (1500)

Architects and engineers must be aware of all the possibilities of using wood as a construction material.

Therefore, a concerted effort is needed among the various provincial authorities, professional associations and the federal government to introduce young professionals to the many possibilities of using wood to build solid buildings that can be both beautiful and safe.

Some architects already consciously and successfully use wood as part of their design to create effects of grandeur, simplicity and flexibility, or simply for aesthetic reasons.

An exterior wood finish can sometimes allow for more flexibility, a visual balance and a harmonious integration with nature, even in an urban environment.

The use of wood in residential construction is quite favourable in terms of ecology and energy efficiency and for creating more intimate spaces. We must go back to the beauty and elegance of wood, and its flexibility, warmth and usefulness.

We need showcase projects in the residential and industrial sectors to demonstrate physically how multi-storey buildings in wood can be esthetically pleasing, practical and long-lasting. That is how, honourable senators, we will contribute to developing a "wood culture."

That is not all. If our intention is to increase the use of wood in the construction of multi-storey wood-framed structures, then harmonizing building codes from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic becomes a priority.

Witnesses expressed the desire to see the National Building Code take a leading role in the use of wood in multi-storey building construction. The National Building Code addresses safety, health, accessibility, and protection against fire and structural damage. The National Building Code often serves as a model for the provinces and territories, which are fully responsible for setting standards under our Constitution. The



National Building Code currently limits buildings to four storeys; however, six-storey buildings have already been built in British Columbia and Quebec.

In the construction of the six-storey buildings, the absence of harmonization created obstacles and major administrative delays. Those delays could last six to ten months or more and affect the contractor's ability to compete with those who use concrete or steel to build a multi-storey building.

Another reality is that our engineers and architects need scientific and specific data concerning the durability and properties of wood materials. To produce the required wood, our manufacturers need accurate data in order to produce materials that meet the requirements of a national building code. These are all valid reasons for harmonizing building codes across Canada with the National Building Code, with respect for federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions. Accordingly, the committee recommends adding the National Building Code to the agenda for the upcoming meetings between the federal Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and his provincial and territorial counterparts.

The committee feels that the National Research Council has a role to play in the validation of "international technical research." International experiences with wood construction and the technical information available should be provided to the entire Canadian industry.

The committee also proposed that the National Research Council oversee consultations among all Canadian stakeholders with the ultimate goal of permitting the construction of multi-storey wood-frame buildings to a maximum height of seven storeys by 2015.

The future of the forest sector depends on innovation, and our committee is concerned about long-term funding for FPInnovations. During the crisis, governments guaranteed the viability of FPInnovations, whose future is now uncertain. It needs stable funding.

In addition, the public sector has the responsibility to support companies by providing tax credits for innovation as well as through tax and tariff policies that encourage investment and modernization in the forestry industry. How many times have we heard entrepreneurs say that they undertake research and innovate but that they do not have the financial means to go beyond that? Businesses that innovate often need a hand getting to the next stage of actually producing a new technology or product. In other words, without help, these businesses disappear into the abyss.

Honourable senators, some recommendations focus on the social, ecological and economic aspects that affect rural and aboriginal communities. We can increase the forest biomass to meet our energy needs while respecting the environment. Similarly, economic activity can be envisaged, such as berry cultivation, birch syrup production or the sale of spices produced from boreal plants.

Honourable senators, we had the opportunity to taste birch syrup when witnesses brought some to an Agriculture and Forestry Committee meeting, and I have to say that it has a very special taste.

Thus, it is essential to continue the Forest Communities Program for another five years.

The committee is well aware that forest-based tourism is on the rise. It is a promising tourism niche, particularly since we have an immense territory to showcase and we already have a network of well-established outfitters we can count on to further develop this niche.

We have also recommended support for initiatives to develop the forest management capacity of the Aboriginal peoples.

The committee suggests developing institutional arrangements in areas such as education, training and commercial development of forestry resources. The active participation of Aboriginal communities is essential to ensuring the viable and sustainable development of forests.

In conclusion, honourable senators, all of the recommendations made in this report take the Canadian reality into account. Even if, by some miracle, the Canadian forestry industry were to make a dramatic recovery, our recommendations would still be relevant and their implementation would simply make the forestry industry more competitive, more sustainable and more environmentally friendly.

#### MOTION IN AMENDMENT

**Hon. Fernand Robichaud:** Honourable senators, in seconding the adoption of this report, I move, seconded by the Honourable Senator Mahovlich, an amendment to the committee chair's original proposal:

"and that, pursuant to rule 131(2), the Senate request a complete and detailed response from the government, with the Minister of Natural Resources being identified as minister responsible for responding to the report".

(On motion of Senator Eaton, debate adjourned.)

• (1510)

[English]

#### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AND CHRONIC CEREBROSPINAL VENOUS INSUFFICIENCY

#### INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

**Hon. Jane Cordy** rose pursuant to notice of June 8, 2011:

That she will call the attention of the Senate to those Canadians living with multiple sclerosis (MS) and chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCSVI), who lack access to the "liberation" procedure.

She said: Honourable senators, we know that nearly 75,000 people in Canada live with multiple sclerosis and that about 1,000 Canadians are diagnosed with the disease every year. We know that, unfortunately, about 400 Canadians die from the disease every year. We know that those living with MS and their families need our support and leadership.



However, honourable senators, I am still looking for further information on this topic, so I would like to adjourn the debate for the remainder of my time.

[Translation]

(On motion of Senator Cordy, debate adjourned.)

### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

#### COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY MANAGEMENT OF GREY SEAL POPULATION OFF CANADA'S EAST COAST

**Hon. Fabian Manning**, pursuant to notice of October 19, 2011, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to examine and report on the management of the grey seal population off Canada's East Coast; and

That the committee report from time to time to the Senate but no later than June 30, 2012, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until December 31, 2012.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

### ADJOURNMENT

#### MOTION ADOPTED

Leave having been given to revert to Government Notices of Motions:

**Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 58(1)(h), I move:

That when the Senate adjourns today, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, October 25, 2011, at 2 p.m.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, is leave granted?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Is it your pleasure, honourable senators to adopt the motion?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

(The Senate adjourned until Tuesday, October 25, 2011, at 2 p.m.)




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